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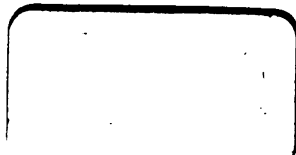


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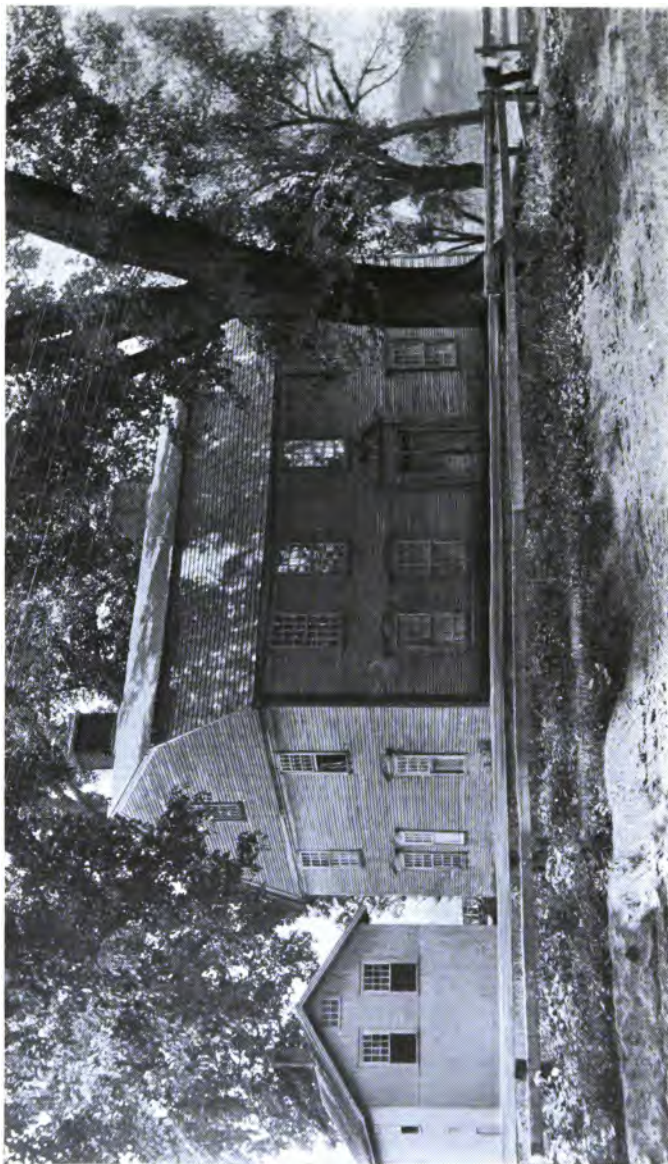


**A CORNER STONE  
OF COLONIAL COMMERCE**



*This edition of*  
**A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE**  
*is limited to one thousand copies*





Old Priest Williams House, East Hartford, built before the Revolution  
*Frontispiece*

6

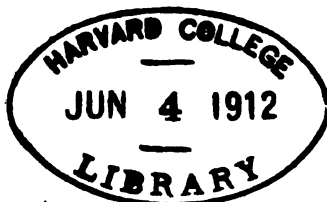
A CORNER STONE  
OF  
COLONIAL COMMERCE

BY  
JOHN A. STOUGHTON  
AUTHOR OF "WINDSOR FARMER"

ILLUSTRATED

—<sup>Ⓟ</sup> BOSTON  
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY  
1911

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*To all those sons and daughters of  
New England, who prefer Old Nation-  
alism under the Constitution, rather  
than Executive encroachment and  
New Nationalism without the Consti-  
tution, this brief sketch of the Fathers  
is respectfully inscribed*



## ILLUSTRATIONS

✓ Old Priest Williams House, East Hartford, built before the Revolution . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
✓ Facsimile of Bill for 459 Pounds of Tobacco (tea barker), and Bill of Lading of Schooner "Success" . . . . .	<i>Facing page 6</i>
✓ Tobacco Beds Covered with Cloth for Sprouting Seed, about April 1st . . . . .	" 7
✓ Facsimile of two pages of Ebenezer Grant's Account Book . . . . .	" 10, 11
✓ Field of "Seed Leaf" Tobacco ready for Cut- ting. Between 1800 and 9000 Pounds to the Acre . . . . .	" 14
✓ Cutting Tobacco . . . . .	" 15
✓ Facsimile of Diploma issued by Yale College to Ebenezer Grant, of East Windsor, Connecti- cut, October 18, 1796 . . . . .	" 22
✓ Old David Strong House on South Windsor Street . . . . .	" 26
✓ Mouth of the Scantic River, South Windsor, Connecticut . . . . .	" 27
✓ Facsimile of Statement of Account of Brigantine "Peggy," 1750 . . . . .	" 32
✓ Modern "Seed Leaf" Tobacco Warehouse, East Hartford, Connecticut . . . . .	" 33
✓ Stringing Tobacco on Lath in the Field . . .	" 38



## ILLUSTRATIONS

✓Interior Views of Warehouse showing Process of Casing Tobacco . . . . .	<i>Facing page</i>	39
✓Rear View of the Ephraim Grant House, South Windsor, Connecticut . . . . .	"	50
✓Old Aaron Bissell Tavern as it was at the close of the Revolutionary War . . . . .	"	50
✓Front Hall of Grant House showing Wainscot and Panelling . . . . .	"	51
✓Sword carried by Colonel Stoughton in the Rev- olutionary War, and Flint-lock Musket, six feet long . . . . .	"	51
✓Detail of Front Hall of the Grant House show- ing original furniture and the ancient clock . . . . .	"	62
✓Showing detail of front of the Grant House, South Windsor, Connecticut, built in 1787 . . . . .	"	63
✓Detail of the front door of the Matthew Rock- well House, South Windsor, Connecticut, built before 1750 . . . . .	"	63
✓Rear View of the Ephraim Grant House Show- ing peculiar reinforced chimney . . . . .	"	70
✓Present appearance of the Birthplace of Jona- than Edwards, South Windsor, Connecticut . . . . .	"	70
✓One of the Old Pitkin Houses in East Hartford, Connecticut . . . . .	"	71
✓Burial-place of Timothy Edwards, South Wind- sor, Connecticut . . . . .	"	71
✓Facsimile of Letter of Chief Justice Oliver Ells- worth to Captain Roswell Grant . . . . .	"	86
✓Facsimile of "Pen Knife" Letter of General Washington . . . . .	"	87

# A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

## I

**A** POINT indicated by the intersection of north latitude 41 degrees, 47 minutes, with longitude east from Washington 4 degrees and 15 minutes, lies nearly in the geographical center of the renowned "Seed Leaf" tobacco region of Connecticut.

This spot is on Connecticut River, about fifty miles north from Long Island Sound, and a circle with a radius of eight miles from it embraces all the territory which first gave the name "Connecticut Seed Leaf Tobacco" to the product, whose superior quality has long been known

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

throughout the commercial world. Herein lay the colonies — Windsor, Hartford, and Wethersfield — where tobacco grows to-day under improved methods of cultivation, even more luxuriantly than ever, and although the cultivated area appears to have been narrowed somewhat within a few decades, and is now compacted pretty well in proximity to the Connecticut River, yet the increased yield per acre and the improved quality are most effective refutations of all the pet theories of exhaustion and impoverishment of the soil that are claimed to attend closely upon its rapid and profitable growth. The argument against it on that ground utterly and signally fails, as will be demonstrated by the facts of this narrative.

It is impossible to forget that within the limits assumed is to be found also the local habitation of that civilization

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

which since 1636, "pushing westward, and northward, and southward," has given to state and national affairs the impress of its own stability, even causing the Constitution of the United States to reflect the harmony of its local state institutions. Windsor, Wethersfield, and Hartford, the three original colonies of the Connecticut Valley, contained within their limits all the productive upland and bottom lands of this region, and to this favored spot where Timothy Edwards, father of Jonathan Edwards, born in 1703, Roger Wolcott, Chief Justice Oliver Ellsworth, Noah Grant, grandfather of the President, Silas Deane, Noah Webster, John Fitch, inventor of steam navigation and a host of Pitkins, Wadsworths, Trumbulls, and Talcotts lived and died, their native State points with pride, and repeats of each that "this man was born there."

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

A strong temptation to retouch the oft rewritten story of the part which her citizens have played lies upon all who take a pen to review this region so prolific in Connecticut's history. The tale is never told, the picture of the State is yet incomplete, and although the public records have been conscientiously scanned, still much of the woof of the historical fabric lies hidden largely in scattered memoranda, private account books, and the fragmentary correspondence of everyday life.

Surely the homely routine of a people as illustrated by their simple annals is a valuable factor in the sum of knowledge regarding their fuller public life. How commerce began, with whom it was carried on, what commodities were sold and bartered, and at what price, — are really matters too intimately connected with the

## **A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE**

growth of a state to be ignored, and to know thoroughly of them one must go back of formulated legislation on the subject.

Even a wider knowledge of the cost of living, the food, the dwellings, the minutiae of local government, habits of certain individuals, eccentricities and general characteristics of families, is invaluable to one who would thoroughly understand the spirit that constitutes a state.

A few brief and changeful sketches of this famed region, drawn from the scattered memoranda of its early inhabitants, may fittingly introduce its era of later growth and be quite properly accompanied by a little of the history of colonial legislation on tobacco.

Captain Ebenezer Grant, of Windsor, east of Connecticut River, a great-grandson of the renowned Matthew, was about 1740

#### A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

largely interested in the colonial West India trade. From his account books, which are models of accuracy, and replete with memoranda of minute transactions, a large insight is given to the beginnings of the commercial growth of southern New England.

The series of linguistic somersaults by which one of Mr. Grant's neighbors charges him with four hundred and fifty-nine pounds of "Tea-bearer," *i. e.*, tobacco, illustrated in the accompanying facsimile, — portion of a bill found among his papers, — and the equally interesting reproduction of a page of Captain Grant's account book, are suggestive commentaries on the entire absence of any standard of orthography in Connecticut. It will be noted that the duty of one hundred pounds indicates a tariff of considerable intensity, but the old gentleman very adroitly mixes

[illegible]

Facsimile of Bill for 459 Pounds of Tobacco (tea barker), and Bill of Lading of Schooner "Success," 1748





Tobacco Beds Covered with Cloth for Sprouting Seed, about April 1st

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

his "frait" (*i. e.* freight) and negro up so that the actual cost of the slave is not clear.

It is not surprising in view of such spelling that the colony of Hartford immediately proceeded to produce the famous lexicographer Noah Webster, who was born October, 1758, in what is now West Hartford, only a few miles from the spot where this spasmodic orthography flourished.

Connecticut legislation on tobacco is brief and pertinent. The "weed" had apparently followed commerce from Virginia to Connecticut, and its use found easy lodgment in the manners of the people. The Connecticut colony within two years from the adoption of its constitution enacted:

"It is Ordered, that what prson or prsons within this jurisdiction shall after September, 1641, drinke any other

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

Tobacco but such as is or shalbe planted within their libertyes shall forfeit for every pound so spent fve<sup>1</sup> shillings, except they haue license fro the Courte." (Col. Records, vol. i, p. 53, June 11, 1640).

A modern political economist may well doubt whether this regulation is designed to prohibit the use or stimulate the cultivation of tobacco. However, very little must have been cultivated, for on January 28, 1646, the General Court passed the following law:

"The order concerning paying 5s. a pound for taking tobacco not growing within this jurisdiction is repealed."

This release evidently quickened the consumption, for we find the General Court on May 26, 1647, premising in the following quaint language:

<sup>1</sup> "U" and "V" were used interchangeably by the old writers.

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

"Forasmuch as it is obseauved that many abuses are comited by frequent takeing Tobacco," an act ordering that no person "Vnder the age of 20 years, nor any other that hath not allreddy accustomed himself to the Vse thereof," should take any tobacco until he procured a "Certificat" from some one approved in "phisicke" that it is "Vsefull for him." A "Lycence" from the court was also a necessary qualification.

The restriction as to age was recently made a very proper amendment to the present Connecticut law, which forbids the sale to and use of tobacco by any person under sixteen years.

But persons armed with the "Certificat" and "Lycence" even if their "Owne apprehensions" made the use of tobacco necessary, were forbidden to take it "Publicquely"; and to use tobacco in the

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

"fyelds or woods" "Vnless they be on their trauill or joyrny at lest 10 myles" was an offense which subjected the offenders to a "penulty" of sixpence.

True, a man might enjoy the comfort of a smoke at the "ordinary tyme of repast comonly called dynner." But this post-prandial felicity was limited by an act which ordained that none should take any "Tobacco in any howse in the same towne wher he liveth w<sup>th</sup> an in the company of any more than one who Vseth and drinketh the same weed w<sup>th</sup> him at that tyme," conviction on all the above offenses to be had on the testimony of one "Witnesse." The legislative restrictions during the first fifty years dealt with the weed from the moral standpoint. Its use was associated in the minds of the lawmakers with idleness, loafing, and drinking. In the New Haven colony, tobacco appears

# Dan. Rockwell Dr

1793	Standing list from Old Book	156	16	13	09
May 25	to put him by Tommy Taz	—	00	02	02
June 12	to get him off by Dan. & Thomas	—	00	04	00
July 3	to half price of paper	—	00	03	00
7	to get him off by 2 get him off	—	00	18	06
12	to get him off by 2	—	00	04	02
Aug. 32	to get off him by 15 & paid for 2 1/2	—	00	06	10
Sept. 17	to get him off by 15	—	00	10	06
Oct. 12	to get him off by 15	—	00	14	00

Facsimile of a page of Ebenezer Grant's Account Book. Page 6

1793	Standing list from Old Book	156	16	13	09
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Sept. 17	to get him off by 15	—	00	10	06
Oct. 12	to get him off by 15	—	00	14	00

for Conk. 20			03 12 06
Jan. 30.	By Exch. from old Book	-	00 10 00
Apr. 12.	By 2 Buys of 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p.	-	01 05 07
May 13.	By 2 Buys of 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p.	-	02 08 00
June 2.	By Cash by hand of David 40/.	-	04 19 06
Nov. 16.	By 2 Buys of 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p.	-	07 13 04
Dec. 23.	By 2 Buys of 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p.	-	00 04 04
March 1.	By 2 Buys of 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p.	-	00 01 04
May 21.	By 2 Buys of 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p.	-	00 06 09
Sept. 24.	By 2 Buys of 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p.	-	02 00 00
Nov. 12.	By 2 Buys of 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p.	-	00 10 00
Dec. 15.	By 2 Buys of 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p.	-	00 07 00
Oct. 24.	By 2 Buys of 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p.	-	01 05 00
Nov. 2.	By 2 Buys of 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p.	-	01 07 00
Dec. 1.	By 2 Buys of 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p.	-	01 07 00
David Drake Dr. brot forward			05 06 11
May 9.	to 2 gallons molasses 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p.	-	01 16 00
June 11.	to 2 gals. Rum 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p.	-	00 16 06
July 1.	to 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p.	-	3 06 02
Nov. 24.	to 2 gals. Rum 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p.	-	6 07 10
June 23.	to 2 gals. Rum 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p.	-	1 16 00
July 14.	to 2 gals. Rum 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p.	-	1 10 00
Aug. 1.	to 2 gals. Rum 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p.	-	1 15 09
Sept. 6.	to 2 gals. Rum 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p.	-	2 10 06
Nov. 2.	to 2 gals. Rum 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p.	-	2 06 00
Dec. 2.	to 2 gals. Rum 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p.	-	0 15 00
Nov. 14.	to 2 gals. Rum 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p.	-	2 00 00
Nov. 14.	to 2 gals. Rum 1/2 p. 1/2 p. 1/2 p.	-	3 01 07

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

to have given an early impetus to commercial legislation, for previous to the union with the Connecticut colony, in 1664, under the charter of 1662, the General Court of New Haven, sitting at New Milford on April 26, 1654, tried Captain John Manning on the charge of "supplying the Dutch with provisions." Now, if there was any rival dreaded by England and her colonists, it was the complacent burgher of New Amsterdam, who enveloped himself in huge clouds of smoke from tobacco, somewhat circuitously imported, and, with the aggressive silence of a cautious and phlegmatic diplomacy, diverted largely to himself the West Indian trade of New England; so that when good Captain Manning, in defiance of the Navigation Acts of Charles II., sought immunity from the penalties of the same, the Court found that he "hath drawn



#### A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

guilt upon himself by continued willfull vntruths or lyes," and proceeded to buttress up the captain's mendacity by proof that he had delivered to the Dutch at "Munnadoes" (*i. e.* Manhattan) "thirty-six hogsheads of tobacco the one time and thirty-five the other," he having "bine" [*i. e.* been] "two time at Verginia since he came from Boston."

Virginia long before this period had devoted all her energies to the cultivation of tobacco, and even made it a medium of exchange. On September 2, 1645, Richard Catchman "complayned" to the New Haven colony that one Thomas Hart had "carryed away his servant from Verginia whereby he was damnified to the Vallew of 2000 weight of tobacco in the price of her," and on November 1, 1647, the will of Nathaniel Cooper, proven in New Haven, disposed of "all of the tobacco

#### A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

I have aboard of the barke Faulcon of New Haven then riding near Rikatan in Vurginia."

But with the increased trade came also the disrespectful habit of familiar smoking against which the sister colony on the Connecticut had legislated. Therefore, New Haven in 1646 ordered: "that whosoever shalbe fownd taking tobacco in an vncovered place, or in the streate of the towne, or in mens yards, shall pay 6*d.* fine each time, also if onn trayning dayes, either in the company or the meeting howse at any time," and again in 1655: "It is ordered that no tobacco shall be taken in the streets, yards or aboute the howses in any plantation or farme in this jurisdiction without dores, neere or aboute the towne, or in the meeting howse, or body of the trayne Souldiors, or any other place where they may doe mischief

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

thereby, vnder the penalty of 84 pence a pipe or a time, wch is to goe to him that informs and prosecuts." Then follow certain provisions for enforcing the collection of the penalty and punishment by sitting in the stocks on default of payment.

The glimmerings of "high protection" for the home product are found in the act of the Colonial Court at Hartford, which in 1662 ordered "that whenever Tobacco is landed in this Colony" "there shalbe" paid by the master of the vessel or "Merchant importer" "Vnto the Custome Master" of the port for every hogshead twenty-five shillings, or twopence per pound. Doubtless, the rich valley lands soon began to produce their wonderful crops; at least the importation fell off and on July 15, 1680, Governor William Leete of Connecticut replied to certain inquiries of "The Lords of his Majesties



Field of Seed Leaf Tobacco ready for Cutting. Between 1800 and 2000 Pounds to the Acre. *Page 14*



Cutting Tobacco. *Page 15*

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

most privy council concerning the trade in his Majesties colony of Connecticott."

"The comodotie of the country are Wheat Peas, Ry, Barly Indian Corn, and Porck Beif Woole, Hemp, Flax, Cyder, Perry and Tarr, deal boards, Pipe staves, Horses. The most transported to Boston and there bartered for cloathing." And adds later: "We have no need of Virginia trade most people *planting* so much *Tobacco* as *they spend*."

A very rapid commercial growth followed closely upon the increased tobacco culture, and it soon figured conspicuously in the intercolonial and foreign trade. The private accounts exhibit the phenomenal fact of a plant whose habitat is in the tropics so adapting itself to a climate that allows it scarcely more than ninety consecutive days from birth to maturity in the open air, as to produce in later days

#### A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

from one thousand pounds to two thousand five hundred pounds per acre, allowing an average of six thousand plants to every one hundred and sixty square rods of ground.

As a result of increased demand a little local merchant marine grew up, whose enterprising owners drove a profitable trade with South America, the West Indies, and even before the American Revolution had quite extensive business associations with European houses.

In South Windsor, formerly a portion of East Windsor, is the residence of the late Major F. W. Grant. This place is now occupied by Roswell Grant, Esq., who is of the fifth generation from Samuel, the son of Matthew, of Old Windsor. On this spot was born Noah Grant, grandfather of the President, and here lived his brother Captain Ebenezer (pre-

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

viously referred to in this article), who retained the homestead after the family separated, Noah removing eastward to Tolland. About three-fourths of a mile below, on the east side of the street, was the parsonage of Rev. Timothy Edwards, father of Jonathan, who for sixty-three years went in and out among his people, representing all that was pure, dignified, and scholarly in New England Calvinism.

Mr. Edwards was a graduate of Harvard College, and eked out a scanty salary by teaching the youth of the colony in the classics, and in this had much valuable assistance from his ten daughters. Many men afterward conspicuous in affairs were fitted for Yale College at this humble New England home. He records as follows:

On "January 8, 1728, Mr. Samuel Talcott, Gov. Talcott's Son by ye Govern<sup>rs</sup> desire came to be instructed in ye



#### A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

Latin Tongue." And in 1738 "Corp<sup>n</sup> Ebenezer Bissell for Teaching his Son Aaron ye Latin and Greek Tongues."

Mr. Edwards also allowed his slave Ansars in 1731 to work "2 dayes howing indian corn for Samuel Evens Sen<sup>r</sup> £00-04*sh.*-00*d.*" all of which helped out the daily stress for necessities. In 1750 or thereabouts, while evidently arguing for some increase of compensation, Mr. Edwards says: "Ye Price of a Serv<sup>t</sup>, viz: A negro formerly £90, my negro was. Now £200 — for a negro woman," a rise in the human commodity which seemingly filled the old gentleman with grievous apprehension for the future. Still, the slavery of that day was more like the Hebrew bondage, and much evidence of kind treatment exists. On November 29, 1741, Mr. Edwards notes in the margin of a sermon that "Phillis, Col<sup>l</sup> Wolcott's

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

Negro woman desires to Join with this Ch<sup>h</sup> in a state of F. C. [*i. e.*, full communion].” This was about the time of the “Great Awakening,” and, as he expresses it, there was a “Plentifull Raining down of Righteousness.”

A little south on the opposite side of the street from Mr. Edwards lived Governor Roger Wolcott, of colonial fame. His house stood just south of the road which joins the main street from the east, thence continuing westward to the river, was known as the Governor’s Road, terminating at the Ferry granted by the General Assembly in 1735 as a “favour and privilege to the worshipfull Roger Wolcott, Esq<sup>r</sup>.”

The son of Major, afterward Governor, Wolcott was also instructed by Mr. Edwards, and in 1730 he is charged: “To teaching his son Alexander, beside what

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

he paid in March 1730 as I remember  
£00-04*sh.*-01*d.*” For which the Major  
“contra he is Cr.”:

“Dec<sup>r</sup> 1730/1. A Bushel of Salt

by my Negro, 00-07-00

“June 29, 1731, By 5 Bushel  $\frac{1}{2}$

of Rie by his Indi<sup>a</sup> man, 01-13-00

“and by sundry Glass bottles for vinegar,  
butter, molasses, &c,” until the account  
balances.

It is evident from the account with  
Major Wolcott that some Indians were  
in a condition of partial servitude. Alex-  
ander, his son, became a prominent  
Revolutionary surgeon and a conspicuous  
citizen.

But we must view the material condi-  
tion of this portion of Connecticut, prin-  
cipally through the medium of Captain  
Ebenezer Grant’s memoranda. His good  
mother Grace (Miner), widow of Samuel

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

Grant, Jr., was charged by Mr. Edwards with "Teaching her Son Ebenezer," fitting him for Yale College; and the young man relates in his account book: "October the 20th 1724, I came to the Colledge again, and the quantity of money yt I brought from home with me in s<sup>d</sup> month was about £4-00 or 2*sh.* or 3-00*d.*"

"When I had got to Newhaven I paid to M<sup>r</sup>. Punderson for ye quarter before Commincement about £02-01*sh.* - 10*d.*

my expences down was about 00-03-02

For a pound of Chocolat 00-04-06

For lying at Balls a few nights 00-01-00

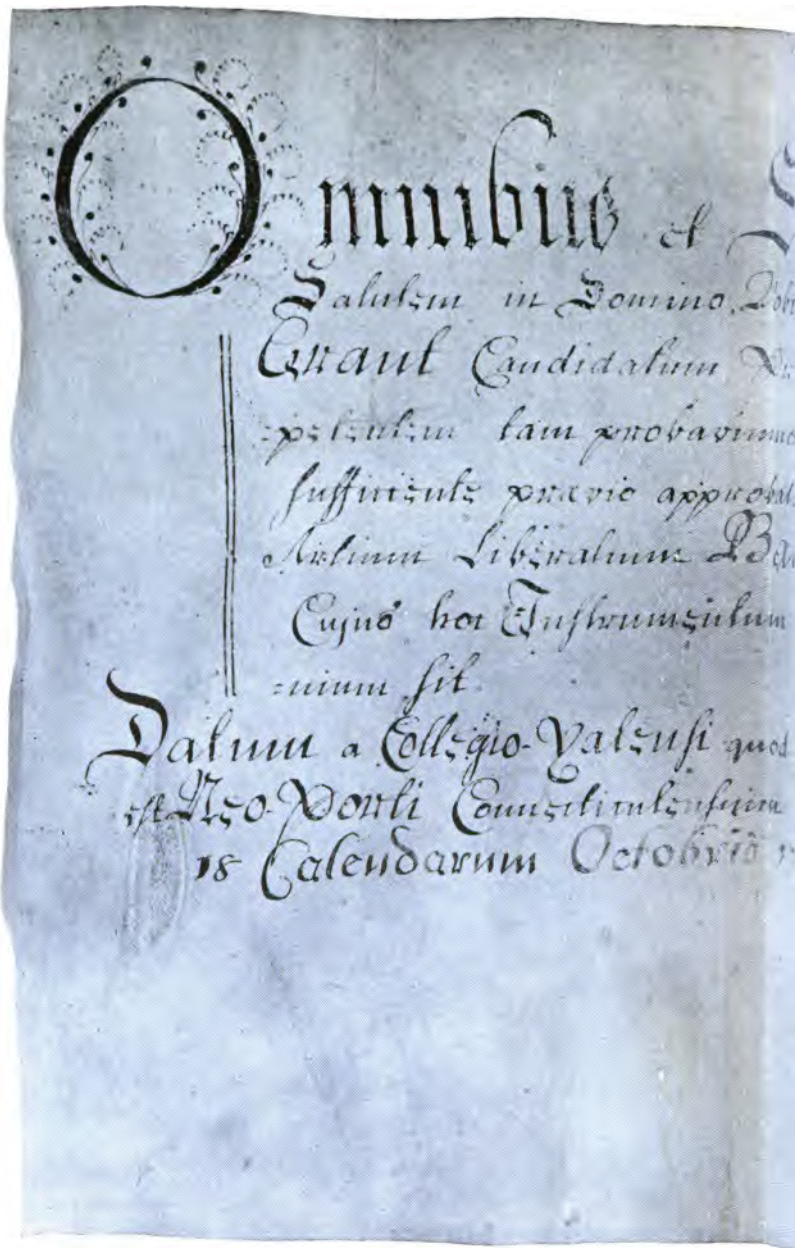
For a peck of apples 00-00-06"

Young Grant went home December 24, and on his return to New Haven bought a pair of gloves for one shilling and eight pence, and a load of wood for three shillings. "Chocolat" and milk are mentioned frequently in the account, and a "Glass to

#### A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

drink in 00-00-09." It cost seven shillings to hire a horse to ride forty miles to his home in August, and for "washing my closes at Johnsons 00-06-03." He also "Paid to the Buttler for sider 00-04-03," and still later "a pint of Rum & a few squoses [*i. e.*, lemons for a lemon squash or lemonade] 00-01-03," liquid insignia that seem to indicate some of the college members to be in good and regular society standing. "For making my Coat 01-05-00," "For Buttons and moldes 00-07-03," "For Buccarum [*i. e.*, Buckram or Bucram], 00-03-06," and "For trimming to my Closes 03-03-07"; and, finally, "for making my cloess & beveridge" the careful student sets down "01-18-03." The following illustration of Ebenezer's diploma is probably the earliest Yale diploma in existence in Connecticut.





Facsimile of Diploma issued by Yale College to Ebenezer Grant

Singulis hac licentia habita  
 nobis actum sit quod **1726**  
 Cuiusmodi in vestibus sanctis  
 quo quam approbavimus. Quia et  
 salum. Nobis placet. Cuiusmodi  
 Matasausi & adomant & iudicio  
 in in Membrana fixatum Testimo

ed	Samuel Andrus p. v. m.	Reitor
ia	Joseph Andrus	
1726	Joseph Andrus	
	Thomas Ruggles	
	Sam <sup>l</sup> Whitman	Cura





## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

Other entries show that Ebenezer was evidently a student who had means enough to get through his course without economizing. He buys "powder and shoot," indulges in oranges, pineapples, and speaks of "keeping a horse at ye Village." "Shades of the mighty!" was New Haven ever a village? Tell it not in Hartford! But the most perspicuous evidence of his diligence as a student is found in the fact that he paid "For a Hodden Arithmetick 00-03-00," and "For 5 dozen of Quills 00-00-09."

The private accounts also indicate that a lucrative trade in Connecticut products must have sprung up about 1700, for not long after tobacco that was produced above the demands for home consumption was exported to foreign ports, and the traffic became general and profitable. But these scenes of commercial and agricultu-

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

ral prosperity were interrupted by the quite frequent demands of the "Publique Service." Captain Grant's commission over a "Train Band East of Connecticut River," in Windsor, issued by Governor Jonathan Law, October 29, 1742, was no empty title. He gives the names of fifty men "that went upon an Expedition into ye frontiers under my command, Dec. 19, 1745," and in a memorandum of conviviality, which doubtless fell upon the rejoicings over the reduction of the French stronghold of Louisburg in the previous summer, he charges, among other items: "Jeremiah Drake, Dr.  $\frac{1}{4}$  expense for Cape Breton frolick 00-04-00," — surely not an extravagant *pro rata* expenditure for four veterans to make. The names of the other two are not given.

The homely life of the river colonists very rapidly changed under the stimulus

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

of commercial enterprises. A better class of houses soon took the place of the old plank frame dwellings. These latter were buildings whose sides were commonly of two-inch plank, spiked perpendicularly on to the heavy frame-work, and either clapboarded or shingled on the outside, — little studding was used on the inside, — and even the partitions between the rooms were often of single inch lumber carried from floor to cross beams, with a paneled base; this often sprung and bowed out under the sag of the upper floors, which, of course, rested on the beams. A huge chimney usually ascended in the middle, and of itself afforded substantial support to the whole building. This feature of the old architecture was retained in many houses built down to the period of the American Revolution.

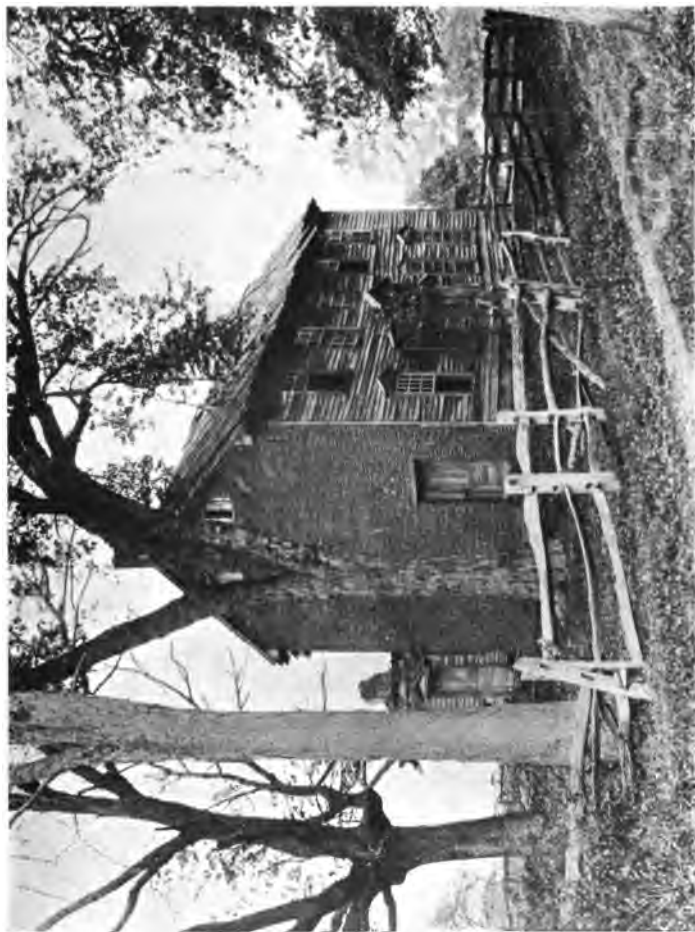
The chimney in the house built by Colo-

## **A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE**

nel Joseph Pitkin, brother of Governor William Pitkin, in East Hartford, in 1726, was over nine feet square where it rose from the stone foundation in the cellar. The cellar in many old houses was on the north side, rarely extending, except in more pretentious edifices, under the whole building. This chimney contained over fifteen thousand bricks and a large amount of stone.

The following picture of the David Strong house, photographed in 1894, shows a house which was old in 1808, and illustrates the improved architecture of the East Windsor parish.

Major F. W. Grant, a grandson of Captain Ebenezer, and who was born in 1794 and died at the age of eighty-seven years, — a life-long resident of East Windsor, — particularly detailed the facts of



Old David Strong House on South Windsor Street. *Page 26*



Mouth of the Scantic, South Windsor, Connecticut. *Page 28*

#### **A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE**

the antiquity of this and many other buildings located in East Windsor. The bricks are of Windsor manufacture and of the standard size prescribed by law; and the fissure extending over the south door may have been caused by the earthquake which Nathaniel Loomis of Windsor mentions: "November 17-1755 the Earthquake was about 4 a-clock in morning it held about 4 minits the hardest that ever came in my time." This shock broke the walls of Benjamin Cook's house, a short distance above, and called forth a practical sermon from Rev. Dr. Eliphalet Williams of East Hartford, whose imposing mansion furnishes a fine type of the improved colonial parsonages of the period. This building remained in its original completeness until 1907. On its walls was hung the first wall paper of which there is any record east of the river. It



## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

is located in East Hartford, and was built in 1753.

It must be kept in mind that all of the territory of which we speak east of Connecticut River was embraced in the limits of ancient Windsor, excepting East Hartford, which was set off from Hartford in 1784. The importance of Windsor as a commercial center was fully as great as Hartford, and even Middletown previous to the Revolution ranked as a shipping port much above Hartford. Shipbuilding became active, and at the "mouth of Scantic," as the junction of that stream with the Connecticut about eight miles north of Hartford was called, a thriving industry grew up. Remnants of the magnificent forests of pine and oak from which supplies were obtained still exist along the tributary streams.

The authentic record of "The Brig<sup>tas</sup>

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

built at Windsor in East Side of y<sup>e</sup> River in y<sup>e</sup> year 1749 to Eben<sup>r</sup> Grant Dr," reads in some items as follows: "1748, Sept<sup>r</sup> 15 to help Draw y<sup>e</sup> Keil with 5 Cattle & ½ pt Rum . . . . . 002£-00-00."

The brigantine was furnished with a quarter deck, and on April 28, 1749, a charge is made of "1-00-00 knees for q<sup>r</sup> Deck"; and the same month Captain Grant charges the owners: "To myself a day to fetch up Long Boat & towe vessel to Hartford 01-10-00."

Captain Fyly [*i. e.* Filley] appears to have superintended the fitting out of the vessel, and received on September 7, 1749, eighty pounds "to pay ye Rigers." The rigging cost three hundred pounds, and Mr. John Fyly received "£91-02-09 for building." Logs for the bilgeways cost £2 and the total expenses of construction were £939 13s. 9d.

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

The "settlement of Cargo March 13th, 1750," amounted to £2933 - 7*sh.* - 1*d.*, New England funds, and the owners were Captain Ebenezer Grant 1/8th part, Mr. Ebenezer Bliss 3/16ths, Mr. Nathan Day 1/16th, Mr. Allen McLean 1/16th, Mr. David Bissell 1/16th, Mr. Sam<sup>l</sup> Watson 1/16th, Mr. Ebenezer Watson 1/16th, John and Charles Gaylord 1/16th, John Laurence 1/4th, and Ammi Trumble 1/16th.

The brigantine's bill of lading shows twenty-seven casks of tobacco, over four thousand feet of lumber, and twenty-six horses on "y<sup>e</sup> proper Acco<sup>t</sup> and Risque of y<sup>e</sup> Shippers." The tobacco weighed 10,296 pounds, and on March 23, 1750, the vessel left New London for the West Indies under command of William Filey "for this present voyage." "The liberty of trade" was £15 0*s.* 6*d.*, and

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

on May 21, 1750, returned the owners £701 0s. 1d. at Barbadoes.

The amount of tobacco shipped on various vessels indicates more extensive dealings in this product than has been credited to the period. "Tobac<sup>o</sup> shyped on y<sup>e</sup> Brig<sup>a</sup> Olive Hez. Colliar master for Barbad<sup>e</sup>, Nov. 12, 1751," amounted to thirty casks, containing 12,664 pounds.

On November 12, 1752, the brigantine Olive received a cargo of 12,764 pounds of tobacco for the Barbadoes, and the same month 12,749 pounds were "pressed for Schooner Ann and shipped."

In the list of growers are to be found the names of most of the Windsor families. The Wolcotts, Ellsworths, Bissells, Stoughtons, Grants, Talcotts, all grew the "weed" for commercial purposes. Captain John Ellsworth, who married Annie Edwards, sister of the renowned Jonathan, sold

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

Captain Grant 1130 pounds on November 21, 1752, the total amount purchased between November 15 and 23 being 26,110 pounds. This tobacco was pressed into casks for shipment, which cost twenty-five shillings each, and contained about four hundred pounds apiece, and this year the cost of labor for packing was three shillings per hundred.

This little fleet of vessels was subjected to various regulations and restrictions of trade, of which Captain Grant makes quaint and suggestive mention. New London was then a favorite port of entry, and thither on December 13, 1752, he made a journey to "Discharge Schooner Ann," and records "pd to Naval Officers £1-16*sh.*-0*d.*," "Bill for Pilotage & Sundry 14-09-9," "cash pd to Mr. Hall for Duty and Cleaning Vessel £540-10-0."

Some information is obtainable as to the





Modern "Seed Leaf" Tobacco Warehouse, East Hartford, Connecticut. Page 35

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

cost of vessels engaged in the commerce. A schooner built at Hartford by Mr. John Filey in 1750 is estimated as follows: "Tonnage 97 at £20 £1940-00-00," "allowance for launching was £60-00-00;" and for altering from a sloop to a schooner £38 12s. was charged to the vessel's account.

"Bill for Riging £849-07sh.-6d.," while Mr. Poyson for £87 1s. 8d. furnished an anchor. To make the sails Mr. Allin charged £81 16s. 9d., and the total cost of construction was £4840 6s. 9d. Of this the ironwork by Burnham was £549 4s., and the "Duck" for sails cost £368 10s. Labor and sundry articles go to make up the remainder. Two top-masts in New London cost £9 17s. in 1751.

These figures indicate the depreciated condition of currency.



## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

Some idea of exchange is obtained from these accounts: In 1753 Mr. Grant paid "Phillips 4 Dollars - 9 - 0 - 0." The credit of Boston was good. A payment of storage - 4£ - 16s. "Boston money" is carried out in the account - "4£ - 16s. - 0d."

Numerous vessels are mentioned in this East Windsor trade: "The Sloop Speedwell, Freeman master, for Barbadoes in 1753;" the brigantine Olive, Samuel Olcott, master; "Schooner Ann, William Filey, master, Brig. Peggy in 1749."

John and Jonathan Simpson of Boston were merchants to whom Captain Grant sold tobacco to the amount of 3045 pounds. On April 13, 1753, and later he "bought of ye Simpsons In Boston, (1) Bar<sup>n</sup> 4d. Nails 46 M at 3sh. - £51 - 15sh. old tenor." "2½ doz<sup>n</sup> Middle length scythes

cost	41 - 17 - 6
"60 lbs. of steel	10 - 0 - 0

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

“and a Grindstone                      3-00-0

“all in old tenor.

“Two half Bar<sup>l</sup> Powder cost 48-00-00

“and 7 Rolls of Duck              182-00-00”

Formerly tobacco was raised in a very crude manner, principally upon local fertilizers, the ordinary stable and hog manures being used as a stimulant; while so late as 1826 the method of hanging the crop was by winding wisps of straw around the plants, which were hung opposite each other in pairs upon poles from twelve to fourteen feet in length. The tobacco for exportation was largely packed in casks in a manner similar to that practiced by the Virginia planters.

About 1850 the use of a coarse twine made of jute or hemp was the common method of suspension, the plants being put on either side of a pole, with the but-end projecting an inch or two above the

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

pole and fastened by a turn of the twine, which was carried across the pole to the corresponding plant until the whole line was filled, the tobacco being usually hung in what may be called a criss-cross method, in order to give plenty of air space, for the purposes of curing, the plants not being placed exactly opposite to each other.

For the last fifteen or twenty years, with the exception of tobacco raised under tents where the leaves are picked from the plant without cutting the stalk, the method has been to string from five to six plants on a lath four feet in length. This is accomplished by inserting one end of the lath into a light frame, and placing upon the other end a spear-shaped steel tip which easily penetrates the stalk, about two inches from the but-end. The laths after being filled are generally trans-

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

ferred to other frames in the field until removed to the curing shed.

The introduction of modern fertilizers has done much to improve the quality, and in fact now the growth has become one of such accurate adjustment that it is possible to so fertilize it as to produce almost any shade or weight of crop desired.

This method of cultivation practically insures the soil against exhaustion from repeated crops. There are several tracts of land from one to ten acres in extent upon which the writer knows that tobacco has been grown consecutively for over thirty years, while the testimony of the owners is emphatically to the point that in weight and quality the crop on the average has improved and in many cases the soil requires less fertilizing than formerly.

Tobacco is a surface feeder, and does | }

## **A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE**

not sap the land like corn, rye, grass, or potatoes.

A most interesting experiment was tried by the late Major F. W. Grant of South Windsor, who detailed the results to the writer. A tract of about five acres of land was carefully ploughed, harrowed, and fertilized up to a high point for tobacco cropping. Upon one-third of the tract tobacco was set out, another third was devoted to Indian corn, and the remaining third to potatoes, the result being very heavy and profitable returns from all the crops.

In the fall of the same year the entire tract was uniformly ploughed and harrowed, and without further fertilizing sowed to rye and a heavy coat of herd's grass and red top. The next season the rye was harvested, yielding a heavy return from the portion which bore the tobacco,



Stringing Tobacco on Lath in the Field. *Page 36*



Interior Views of Warehouse showing Process of Casing Tobacco. *Page 36*

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

a fairly good return from the portion from which the potatoes had been taken, and a lighter return from the corn tract. The stubble was cut and the tract was then left as grass-land, from which hay was harvested for several seasons. The returns of the latter from the portion of the tract devoted to corn failed first to give good results, the potato land came next in order, and the portion devoted to tobacco was producing a good crop of hay some time after it became necessary to restock the potato and corn land for herd's grass. The experiment clearly demonstrated that the tobacco took less from the soil than the other two crops.

Among other commodities shipped from East Windsor were pipe staves, pork, rye, Indian corn, oats, and a good many horses, a "large brownish bay shipped to Barbadoes in December, 1750, was valued



#### **A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE**

at £150, Roan Dutch mare £40, a Darkish Roan £90.”

Passing from the consideration of these especial features of the community, other phases of East Windsor local life attract our attention. The parish east of the river was from 1694, for a period of sixty-three years, under the ministry of Rev. Timothy Edwards, father of the celebrated Jonathan. We find from the records that:

In 1720 one hundred and forty people were assessed for taxes to support the church on the east side of the Connecticut River. Among these Roger Wolcott was assessed on an estate of 115 pounds; Simon Wolcott 124 pounds; Henry Wolcott, 105 pounds; Grace Grant, 156 pounds. Grace Grant was the widow of Samuel Grant, Jr., and the mother of Ebenezer to whom reference has been made. Samuel

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

Grant, Jr., was the grandson of Matthew Grant, the historic town clerk of Windsor. Ebenezer was fitted for Yale College by Mr. Edwards, and in the account of his tuition frequent charges against his mother appear on Mr. Edwards' book. In this connection it is an instructive feature of colonial life to consider the immense educational work undertaken by that humble minister. Twenty-three young men studied with Mr. Edwards, some of them from other towns, and many of them afterward entered and graduated from Yale College. Among the best known was Alexander Wolcott, son of Governor Roger Wolcott, who in 1729 came, to use the quaint language of Mr. Edwards, "to be instructed in the tongues, namely, to be further instructed for the revival of his learning." For this tuition Governor Wolcott paid Mr. Edwards in 1730 four

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

shillings and one pence. Among other names we find those of Abijah Skinner, Joseph Newberry, John Anderson, John Wolcott, Aaron Bissell, and Isaac Stiles. The latter afterward graduated from Yale, and was the father of President Stiles of Yale College. On January 8, 1728, Samuel Talcott, Governor Talcott's son, came for instruction in the Latin tongue. The list also includes the famous Jonathan.

The houses of these colonists may be considered as divided into three classes, proportioned to the wealth and social distinction of their owners. Of those now standing in this community, a lean-to house built in 1725 on the east side of Main Street known as the Eph. Grant house, and nearly opposite the present residence of Mr. Roswell Grant, may be taken as a fair type of the average farmhouse at the time of Mr. Edwards' labors.

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

A typical house of what may be called the more advanced condition of the people is still standing, and was built by Dr. Matthew Rockwell, who was at one time engaged to marry Mary Edwards, sister of Jonathan; nearby the Grant mansion, so called, on the west side of Main Street, still standing on the ancestral acres granted to Samuel Grant in 1680, represents the highest social condition of a prosperous farmer merchant of the same period. The Grant house was constructed as it now stands principally by Ebenezer Grant, the merchant to whom we have referred, although the rear part is supposed to be much older and to go back as far as 1684. The peculiarity of many of these older houses consists of the fact that usually the cellar was on the north side, and extended only under one-half of the house. That is the case in the Ephraim Grant

#### A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

house, and was also the case in the old Verstill house, which was at one time occupied by Mr. Perry, Timothy Edwards' colleague. It was also a distinguishing feature of the several houses built about the same time in the neighboring town of East Hartford, and in many of them also the north room was always the better finished of the lower rooms, and very often located over the cellar.

There was at one time a turbulent spirit abroad in Mr. Edwards' parish, so in one of his sermons he particularly notes the decline in courtesy which should be extended by young people to their elders, and remarks that the young men do not raise their hats to their elders when they meet them on the street. This tendency toward a laxity of manners attracted the attention of so distinguished a commentator as Chief Justice Oliver Ellsworth, who

#### **A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE**

in his memoranda preserved by his son and transmitted for the edification of future generations, deplores the fact that "there has been developed an indifference in those things which tend toward the development of the better side of human nature and to the cultivation of the spirit of gentlemanly forbearance and courtesy between brethren."

A glimpse at these New England homes from 1680 to 1750 exhibits on the whole a very large variety of conditions. There were some families in whom the spirit of worldliness was so deeply entrenched that the greatest self-sacrifice of a devoted pastor and the solicitude of friends were alike indifferently received. Mr. Edwards' sermons offer interesting suggestions relative to the condition of the church and the community where he labored. The manuscripts bear notes of the various

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

circumstances under which they were delivered, — times of mourning, thanksgiving, fasting, and drought. In 1748 he makes the following note upon a sermon: "East Windsor, on a fast day, kept by many of the inhabitants of this place, namely, of this church and society, by my desire, in a time of very great and sore drought, to seek to God for rain.

"August 30, 1748."

Another has a memorandum: "East Windsor on a lecture day, March 6, 1705-6." Then on September 30, 1711, he quaintly observes that the sermon was preached, "being the next Sabbath after my return home and after my sickness in the camp, when I went, one of the chaplains to our regiment in our expedition, etc., this year, being much better than I had been while abroad, and still in a recovering way."

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

On November 24, 1744, he makes note of preaching a Thanksgiving sermon on the day appointed by Governor Law, and an interesting and touching example of his fidelity to his work is suggested by the memorandum attached to a sermon which he notes as preached at Captain John Ellsworth's house at a religious meeting.

Mr. Edwards' power as a preacher, which descended in an intense degree of eloquence and logical force to his son, made him conspicuous as one to whom neighboring churches turned for spiritual relief. In 1712-13 he prepared a sermon to be preached in Middletown, a discourse on the death of a minister, and also in 1704-05 an elaborate sermon on sacrament day.

These are not the studied efforts of great occasions, but the common preaching of pastoral duty for God's glory in a



## **A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE**

humble New England hamlet. In 1694 the church at Suffield had fallen into a disturbed and dissonant condition. In October of that year Mr. Edwards preached an elaborate sermon at the church, and remarks that it was a fast day, in which he rebukes with fearless and forcible eloquence the hypocrisy and sinfulness of that community, — a sermon which it is well worth studying with reference to one particular point, that although this educated, stern, and fearless man never hesitated to rebuke evil or to differ from his neighbors or to reproach those in high places, who justly deserved it, he says, that “God is wont in his judgments to remember mercy and doth not commonly stir up all his wrath against his people, and therefore this should oblige them to repent of their sins against Him, and unfeignedly with all their hearts to turn

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

toward Him, and with the spirit within them to seek Him early."

While we are not informed as to the particular delinquencies of the people of Suffield, that there must have been some special reason for Mr. Edwards' long and careful arraignment of their weaknesses is apparent from the third application of the sermon which we are now considering, in which he says: "Have not you, ye people of this town, the inhabitants of this place, for some years been under the awful angry frowns of Heaven, and are you not so now?" And again he reminds them more especially with respect to some awful and sad expressions and touches of divine anger peculiarly and immediately concerning themselves, that "God had cut them short in the fruit of the year, as well as their neighbors and that for some years he cut you short also in the ordinance of

#### A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

his Gospel, so that in a more awful way than your neighbors round about you, have you not been awfully damned in the ways of God's providence?"

In 1709 he preached a sermon to his own people on a day of thanksgiving, being the next week after a public fast, "upon the account of our fatal disappointment in our expedition against the French and Indian enemies, Wednesday, third of November, 1709." In 1741 the community was afflicted with what Mr. Edwards terms the "throat distemper." On November 29 of that year he preached a sermon which he delivered on the "second Sabbath after Enoch Morris lost his son of about eleven years, and the last of the children by the throat distemper."

A carefully prepared sermon of Mr. Edwards' contains this memorandum in his handwriting: "East Windsor, May,



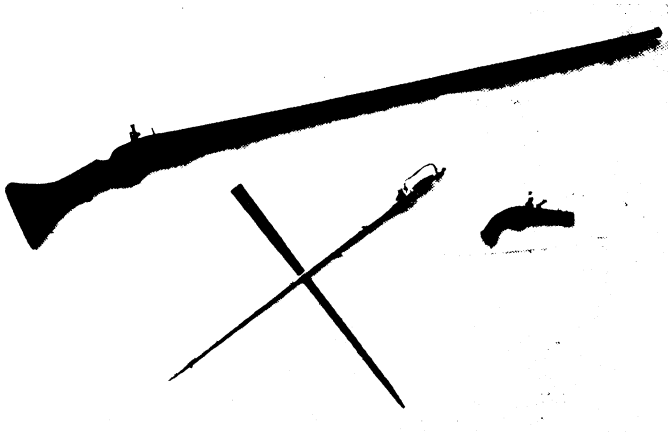
Rear View of the Ephraim Grant House, South Windsor. *Page 78*



Old Aaron Bissell Tavern as it was at the close of the Revolutionary War. *Page 72*



Front Hall of Grant House showing Wainscot and Panelling. *Page 74*



Sword carried by Colonel Stoughton in the Revolutionary War, and Flint-lock Musket, six feet long, with which the last Indian killed in East Hartford, was shot, about 1750

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

1712, on the second article of the writing drawn up by the ministers of Hartford, Windsor and Farmington, A. D., 1711, and solemnly and generally engaged to on the east side of the river at Windsor. The article is this, namely: We will carefully watch any signs of irreverence in the worship of God and of profanation of his glorious and fearful name, by causeless imprecations and rash swearing, or in any other way in which it is or may be taken in vain," — a topic which may well commend itself to the present generation of ministers as one to be frequently enlarged upon in this year of grace 1910.

Neither was there anything in Mr. Edwards' whole ministry of that temporizing policy by which the church has too often been compromised at the expense of the principles upon which it was

#### **A. CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE**

founded by Him whose kingdom is not of this world.

Mr. Edwards appears to have been ever ready to contribute from his book-shelves such reading as would help his neighbors. He makes the memoranda in April, 1726: "Lent Sergeant Rockwell the 'Meditations of a Saint seeking after Christ,' with another book concerning the experiences of a Scotch minister." And on June 6 he "lent Brother Whitman one of Jonathan's books concerning Christianity or some such subject by a German divine." In May he "lent neighbor Rockwell a book called 'The Pious Soul Seeking after Christ, in a hundred meditations,' with another called 'Pillars of Salt.'"

Joseph Skinner, who seems to have been exceedingly handy as an all-round man, appears on Mr. Edwards' account book in the shape of a credit by a turkey

#### A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

and by a dozen pigeons. Wild pigeons were exceedingly numerous, and are frequently entered up in the local memoranda as a portion of household stores. On August 27, Mr. Edwards credits Joseph Skinner by drawing a tooth for his daughter Esther, and by drawing a tooth for Abigail, one shilling; September 19, by drawing a tooth, one shilling, which presumably was one of the pastor's molars, as he makes no suggestion as to whom it belonged. May 7, 1726, Lucy Edwards lost a tooth at the same skilful hands, and on June 14, 1727, Joseph Skinner again extracted a tooth for Lucy, and stopped long enough to varnish two chairs, for which the pastor credits him two shillings and eightpence. August 3, 1727, he is quaintly credited by "a dozen and half of pigeons, and a dozen more, and half a dozen more, in all three dozen, one shill-



## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

ing and threepence." Possibly this extra brushing, varnishing, and tooth pulling had reference to the coming wedding of Esther, who married the Rev. Samuel Hopkins of West Springfield, Mass. This was the second wedding of Mr. Edwards' daughters, the second daughter Elizabeth having married Colonel Jabez Huntington of Windham, June, 1724.

Although Mr. Edwards had a farm which was given to him at the time of his settlement and on which his father had built him a house, yet the increased expenses of a large family and the depreciation in the purchasing power of the currency reduced him at times to considerable extremities. In 1735 Mr. Edwards' salary was one hundred and thirty-five pounds, but his family was expensive, and the provision for the marriage of his daughters had drawn heavily upon

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

his income. In a blank space on one of his sermons he states what he calls "a case," as follows: "Whether a minister wanting wherewithal comfortably to live in the world and provide for his family, and that not through the inability of the people, and after much painstaking in the use of proper means, hath no prospect of the supply of that want by those whom he serves in the work of the ministry, may not on that account lawfully leave his people and remove." At this time Mr. Edwards had been for forty-one consecutive years pastor of the East Windsor Church. One can hardly look back through the decades to that solitary scholar in a wilderness and be entirely unmoved at the pathos of the situation. And he indeed is a lesson to those who in the home work at times feel that the stress of circumstances, combin-

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

ing with the opportunities for larger pay, tempt them strongly to hie from parish to parish. At this time he makes some comparisons between the cost of living in 1735 and 1694, the year of his settlement. He refers to land, and says that Deacon Drake told him that land when he came there was worth four pounds in money, and now it is seven times as dear. When he came, he says a good large deerskin was dressed for four shillings and sixpence in money, and now such a skin, his neighbors tell him, would cost four pounds in the hair. He says rum was sold in former years in Hartford for four shillings for the single gallon; now he hears that it is eighteen shillings a gallon, which leads him to the conclusion that rum is nine times as dear as it was when he settled among them. Then after referring to the advanced cost of sugar, labor, rye, pork, and

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

wheat he pauses in his twenty-first memorandum to consider quaintly the cost of negro labor, and to quote his own language: "negro was formerly 90 pounds; my negro was; now 200 pounds for a negro woman." Mr. Edwards had two negro slaves or servants; one he bought from Governor Wolcott, and another was purchased from an unknown source, and frequently he loaned or hired them out to his neighbors for a moderate compensation.

Connecticut had been settled nearly sixty years when Windsor became a conspicuous and far-reaching influence in the state. Other causes had combined with the first great cause to force a steady stream of immigration to New England, and a consideration of the condition of England from 1680 to 1724 seems necessary to a proper understanding of the

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

social and political conditions of Windsor. The revels of the court following the Restoration and the sharp alternations of a fluctuating power for a long time permitted in England one day free speech and free writing, and on the morrow closed by censorship the press and the voice of contributors by imprisonment in the Tower.

Persecutions drove men to New England whose hearts were more or less hardened by repeated blows of fortune, so that to properly make just comparisons between various elements in the colonies we must look at the home land. Here a generation had been born. Truly, indeed, it had come to the fullness of its manhood under the impulse which energized and strengthened the first settlers; but another generation mingling with the new-comers from England were taking their places among the rank and file, so that the forces in

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

church and state were sometimes in a warring and discordant attitude. To correct these the colonies originated a remarkable legislative code, and the names of Ludlow, Haynes, Warren, Edwards, Wolcott, the Ellsworths, Grants, Loomises, and a host of Gideons and Barachs, of which time will fail to tell, had assumed the reins of government and massed the forces of a far-reaching Christian civilization. We must not wonder that there were stern and relentless minds among these colonists, — some of them were fresh from England at a time when London Bridge was ornamented with mouldering heads of state criminals, when there was nothing like a daily paper published in England, the only source of general information to the people being the occasional news letters and London *Gazette*, the latter issued two days in a

## **A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE**

week, and timidly venturing to record only such doings of government as a relentless censorship permitted. So closely supervised was it that on November 16, 1685, not a word appears in its columns about the trial and acquittal of the seven bishops. At this time there was scarcely a printer in the kingdom outside of the universities and at the capital, a condition which extended its baleful repression over a quarter of a century, so that in 1724 there were thirty-four counties in England where there was no printer, and of those counties one was Lancashire.

The cultivation of the female mind in the seventeenth century, to use the words of Macaulay, "seems to have been almost entirely neglected in England," and even slow as was the communication between the colonies and the mother country, it is impossible for us to believe that the

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

effect of this depressing and debasing social condition in England was not keenly felt in the colonies. We turn, therefore, with the more admiration to these men of the wilderness whose school laws, whose pauper laws, whose laws on the domestic relations, whose enactments concerning trade among themselves, constitute a code of admirable proportions. From a day when English masters beat their pupils, and husbands of decent women were not ashamed to whip their wives, when books were in so small a demand in the then prosperous town of Birmingham, England, that Michael Johnson, father of the noted Samuel Johnson, could supply from a temporary booth in the market-place in a few hours the total demand, we turn with admiration to the wisdom of the Connecticut colonists.

The legislature of Connecticut, however,



#### **A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE**

had kept a careful watch over and anticipated any tendency toward extravagance in dress, and on May, 1676, the General Court passed the following act: "Whereas excess in apparel amongst us is unbecoming a wilderness condition and a profession of the Gospel whereby the rising generation is in danger to be 'indangered' which practices are testified against in God's holy Word, it is therefore ordered by this Court and authority thereof, that what person whatsoever shall wear gold or silver lace or silver buttons, silk ribbons, or other costly superfluous trimmings, or any bone lace above three shillings per yard, or silk scarfs, the list makers of the respective towns are hereby required to assess such persons so offending, or their husbands, parents or masters under whose government they are, in the list of the states, at 150 pounds each."



Detail of the front hall of the Grant House showing Original Furniture and the ancient clock. *Page 74*



Detail of the front door of the Matthew Rockwell House,  
South Windsor, built before 1750. *Page 76*



Showing details of front of the Grant House, South Windsor,  
built in 1757. *Page 74*

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

One may well stop to query what the domestic scene would be in 1910 if the husband were directed specially by law to investigate the exact cost of his wife's wardrobe, and should actually investigate and report to the assessors.

The character of the East Windsor population and the multiplicity of its affairs is illustrated by the occupations of some of the more prominent citizens. Deacon Job Drake was a tailor; Samuel Grant, the son of old Matthew Grant, was a carpenter and proprietor of a cider mill; Nathaniel Bissell owned a cider mill and was a ferryman and shoemaker; Peter Mills, Jr., was a tailor; Samuel Elmer was a weaver; Thomas Marshall, a wheelwright; the local blacksmith was Thomas Burnham; John Wolcott was a brewer; the East Windsor brickmaker was Simon Drake; and later, in 1725, we find that

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

Jabez Colt was weaving cloth for Mr. Edwards.

Some reference having been made to the difficulty in curbing and restraining the manners of Mr. Edwards' parish, and as the east and west parishes of Windsor were practically identical in this respect, it may be interesting to quote the opinion of Chief Justice Ellsworth, that most distinguished son of old Windsor, who at the age of forty-seven years says, according to memoranda made by his son, that when he was a boy "all ate upon wooden trenchers, that manners were then coarse and such that would now in many respects prove disgusting, that men in Windsor formerly assembled together in each other's houses and would drink out a barrel of cider in one night."

In the year 1741 occurred the remarkable awakening and revival of spiritual

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

interest which very generally stirred Mr. Edwards' parish, and at the same time witnessed the strained relations between the pastor and the people regarding matters which at the present day we should consider extremely trivial.

When the town was first settled the dangers incident to occasional Indian incursions and the difficulty of communication between distantly separated families prevented the development of a close social union, but it is remarkable to observe the fidelity with which these sturdy settlers forced themselves to attend divine service, often under circumstances of actual distress and vast inconvenience. So late as June 30, 1706, Solomon Andross killed one of several Indians who broke into his house.

Several attempts were made to divide the parish, and a vast amount of discussion, flavored with some printed comments

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

in the line of alleged poetry, contributed to keep the matter at fever heat. At the same time Jabez Colt, whom we will recall as a weaver, mixed up the warp and woof of his complaint in the following metrical wail, to show why the meeting house on the east side of the river was not conveniently located. We select from the fifteen or twenty stanzas one as follows:

“One other reason yet there is which I will  
    unfold,  
How many of us suffer much, both by the  
    heat and cold.  
It is four milds which some of us do go  
Upon God’s holy Sabbath day in times of  
    frost and snow.  
Two milds we find in Holy Writ a Sabbath  
    day’s journey be  
But wherefore then are we compelled for to  
    go more than three ? ”

The productive power of this community is beyond calculation. Its perennial

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

streams have fertilized distant and unknown fields, and from an unremitting source of supply through two hundred years have made fruitful waste places touched by their refreshing waters.

He who enters into and comes to an understanding of that simple life and its labors, views its sacrifices, and feels the spirit of its aspirations and sympathizes with its toilers, will feel the fullness of its force and stand like a privileged visitor on the threshold of national greatness.

We of to-day may well imitate the slow and cautious policy of the fathers. One can scarcely read the humble preambles of their early legislation without feelings of deep pathos. They left untouched none of the fountains of human blessings, and if at times their legislation is particular and sometimes minute, it was based



## **A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE**

upon the desire that all should share equally in the laws and participate fully in the benefits of civil liberty.

The salvation of New England from materialism, and if of New England, of the nation, and if of this nation, then the speedy help for all people, is yet to be found in these her ancient towns, — these abiding places of that stern and magnificent faith which has left its impression on state and national councils. These little churches just now so feebly nourished will yet live to see the reflux force of their generosity return from the Orient to enlarge and beautify the places from which it went forth. The Bible holds no uncertain place in the hearts of many to-day, and here where once it was a basis and a part of common school instruction, here again New England manhood shall receive a new vitality and the common people

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

shall yet hear it gladly. Here the charity that commenced at home in the legislation in 1700 will yet adorn the glorious temple of its ancient faith. It is a false construction of language, a fallacious, a pernicious abandonment of principles, a weakening of every muniment of title to nationality, and a hateful blow at the leaders of our ever-extending civilization when through cowardice or for lack of faith the Bible is shut out of the common schools and closed to the eager and susceptible minds of youth. If these Connecticut towns suffer to-day any decadence, any abatement of their moral force and intellectual strength, it is because they have forgotten the teachings of the fathers and substituted for the simple and direct influence of the Bible upon education, the evasive, the uncertain, and almost pernicious doctrines of a let-alone policy.

## **A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE**

**Let it be restored and made a part of our educational system. Restore it now, before the foundations laid by the fathers crumble into indistinguishable fragments, — restore it and leave its influence without other comment than its benign words carry with them. We send it to the heathen, and rejoice at their coming into the light. We make it the basis of education from Cape Town to the frozen zone. Grand triumphs of the century are based upon it. It is the handmaid of civilization throughout the world. Merchants take it to the Orient; missionaries carry it into every quarter of the globe; we send it by thousands of copies into the dominion of the Sultan; and print it on American presses in Constantinople. We translate it into every language where Christian charity touches mankind, and then stultify the work by banishing it from the**



Rear view of the Ephraim Grant House showing peculiar reinforced chimney  
*Page 78*



Present Appearance of the birthplace of Jonathan Edwards,  
 South Windsor, Connecticut. *Page 79*



One of the old Pitkin Houses in East Hartford, Connecticut. *Page 85*



Burial-place of Timothy Edwards, South Windsor, Connecticut. *Page 78*

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

schools of our children in this wide and ever-extending domain of the fathers.

It was to Connecticut that Daniel Webster paid his distinguishing tribute in the United States Senate when he spoke of her as "that State so small in territory but so distinguished for learning and talent, Connecticut," and at the same time referred to Oliver Ellsworth, her distinguished son, as "a gentleman who had left behind him on the records of his Government and his Country proofs of the clearest intelligence and of the utmost purity and integrity of character"; and it is worthy of remark that Mr. Ellsworth's bearing and character were such when he was in France that the Emperor Napoleon, then First Consul of France, was so impressed by his meeting with him that he said, "We shall have to make a treaty with that man."

## II

**S**OME reference to the homesteads of the period we are considering may properly close this transient view of the business routine of the colonists. The accompanying illustrations will give a fair idea of the prevailing architecture of the New England homes from about 1700 to the close of the Revolutionary period, as they were then occupied by the people of Old Windsor, east of the Connecticut River.

Among the conspicuous houses of that era was the Captain Aaron Bissell tavern, a picture of which is subjoined. This was a famous place of rendezvous for the organized militia during the Revolutionary

#### A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

period, and an order of Colonel Lemuel Stoughton is extant in which they are notified to "rendezvous at Aaron Bissell's tavern."

This building was about forty-five feet in length and thirty-five feet in width, with an ell extending to the west, containing the kitchen and living room of the proprietor and his family, over which was the ball room, so-called. The tavern stood on the west side of Main Street, facing the east, at what is now known as East Windsor Hill, and was located on the old stage route from Hartford to Springfield; the route not being wholly discontinued until about 1876, when railroad facilities east of the river did away with this slower method of conveyance.

The room in the southeast corner of the building, entered through the portico, was the old tap room or bar room, and was



## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

fitted in a simple but convenient manner for dispensing the small variety of liquors then handed out to the casual wayfarer. It was open upon the north side and looked out upon an ample lounging room with a wide fireplace and the usual appointments of a colonial inn.

Among the substantial houses of the neighborhood was the house built by Ebenezer Grant, and still standing in a good state of preservation on the same side of the street about half a mile below the Bissell tavern. To quote Mr. Grant's own language: "Memorandum for Materials for my House. Began in 1757 and finished in 1758." The accompanying illustration shows the detail of the doorway and the general appearance of the front of the house. The interior finish of the front hall is also shown, the brass clock having been in the old house since

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

1765, and bears date on the brass work, 1670. The substantial character of the work upon the house may be inferred from some items taken from Mr. Grant's account book.

Tomas Sad Jr bill for getting stone	£9	01s	9½d
Math <sup>w</sup> Grant do with him	8	08s	2.0
Carting 60 load stone from hill at 5s	15	00	00
9 boatloads stone from ye Falls at 10s			
viz. 8 days,	4	10	00
Carting 30 load from Scantick at 18d	2	05	00
30 load in my old seller	7	10	00
3 load Haydens stone and carting and			
boating	1	00	00
Will <sup>m</sup> Buckley bill for hewing	23	17	06
	71	12	5½
To digging seller and laying wall	7	00	00
	78	12	5½
To ye frame with ye [Labor] about	£40	00s	00d
To ye raising, dinner, etc.,	5	00	00
Masons bill	29	06	06
Tending mason	4	18	00
	34	4	6
To 26000 brick at 20s	26	00	00
To 14000 cedar shingles at 20s	14	00	00

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

To 2050 cedar clapboards at 5£	10 05 00
To 1500 sawed white pine do at 6£	4 10 00
To 37000 board 10 white pine at 3£ ye	
rest yallo at 5£	97 10 00
To 14000 lath at 12s	8 08 00
To 14 HHd of lime stone at 28s	19 12 00
To a bar <sup>l</sup> of linseed oyle at 4s per gal.	6 00 00
120 lbs. white lead at 11d per lb., and	
do. Spanish white at 3d per lb.	7 00 00
To 3 boxes of window glass at 3£ per box	9 00 00
To 16000 8d nails at 9s and 4 lbs. 10s	
cash for Double tens,	10 00 00
To a bar <sup>l</sup> of tens and 14000 4d nails at	
4s and 45000 lath nails at 3s	9 11 00
To brads	
To Gray's bill of joynering	46 11 07
To Aaron Grants for do	47 19 3
To Abiel Grant do	19 6 8
To Josiah Pinny do	16 07 04
To Isaac Clark	2 09 03

“1757. Raised my house June 24.  
Aaron ½ day to nail lap studs.”

The Matthew Rockwell house, built  
before 1750 and, as the story goes, erected  
by Rockwell as a home for himself and

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

prospective bride, who was to have been Mary Edwards, a sister of the renowned Jonathan, presents the peculiarity of having all the lower sash one row of lights smaller than the upper sash through the whole house, and is the only building in the neighborhood that exhibits that distinguishing feature. In this house the cellar was finished on the south side and was about ten by twenty feet in dimension, paved with brick, with a large fireplace in the center, with an oven,—there being no oven, as was ordinarily the case, on the main floor. While some attempt was made at architectural decoration on the exterior of the house, the cornice being very heavy and projecting about twenty inches, the interior finish was exceedingly plain, but substantial.

Another old house in the immediate vicinity, known as the Ephraim Grant

#### **A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE**

house, stood on the east side of the street, and was removed to make way for a modern structure during the year of 1909. This house was built before 1740, and the two views herewith give a very clear idea of the lean-to building of that period. The ceilings were very low, only about six and one-half feet between joints, and the windows were originally glazed with diamond-shaped panes which gave place during the Revolutionary period to small six by eight glass.

A half mile below was the old burial ground, and the tomb in the foreground of the accompanying illustration is that of Rev. Timothy Edwards.

The other illustration shows all that remains of the homestead where Jonathan Edwards was born, in 1703. The well-curb in the foreground marks the original well of the homestead. The old house

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

stood a little to the northwest of the well and facing Main Street.

The building shown in the photograph has no relation whatever to the Edwards' property.

A house illustrating very conspicuously the substantial character of the homes of the wealthiest citizens was built by Colonel Joseph Pitkin in 1726, in East Hartford, about four miles below East Windsor Hill. This was constructed after the old scribe rule plan by which each stud or piece of timber was marked or scribed for the particular place it was to occupy. The sills were of oak, forty-one feet long, eight by ten inches, with the wide face laid upon the underpinning. The superstructure, which was thirty by forty-one feet, was supported on oak posts nine by nine inches at the bottom and ten by fifteen inches at the top, being mortised about half-

## **A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE**

way up to receive the cross beams of white oak eight by twelve inches which were heavily tennoned into the posts and secured by three one and one quarter inch oak pins. These beams were thirty feet long and carried all the weight of the second floors, without any studding to support them from end to end. The house was entered upon the south side by stepping over the sill on to a floor laid upon loose joists, dropped a sufficient distance so that the floor came a little above the level of the bottom of the sill, the latter being neatly cased and boxed with a plain finish while a double door gave access to the front hall on the east.

The cellar was built of stone and occupied a portion of the north half of the building, which faced the east, making a cellar about fifteen by thirty feet. In many old houses the north room was finished

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

better than the south room — this was true of the buildings herein mentioned.

The interior finish of the rooms was heavy paneling of native yellow and white pine, a portion of which still remains.

The doors were generally of two panels, the upper panels being twenty-two inches wide by thirty-six inches long, the lower about twenty-two inches square, with wide bevels inserted in the gains cut in the center of the framework of the door, which were supported and hung upon wrought-iron H. L. hinges. This house was lathed with rived cedar lath averaging about  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inches in width and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet long, and was plastered with a mixture of clay and hair, which after being smoothed over was subjected to two or three coats of whitewash.

The structure was heated by five large fireplaces, — one opening into the kitchen,



## **A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE**

containing a spacious oven, and the others devoted to the purpose of heating the living room and chambers.

Several of the sleeping apartments were furnished with high-post tester beds, the posts of which were mortised into the floor for stability, and extended to the ceiling, supporting a framework from which was draped the heavy curtain which could be drawn to insure warmth and protection from the bitter New England weather.

Some idea of the splendid forests which supplied the material for building at that period, may be gathered from the fact that the garret floor of this Pitkin house, which was thirty by forty feet in area, required only twenty-two boards to cover the thirty feet in width, the lumber being about fifteen feet long.

The floors were laid with a ship-lap and spiked to the joist by heavy, wrought-iron

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

nails. The house was studded with three by four oak studs, mortised into the sills and plates, to which were nailed sheathing boards, the edges of the boards being beveled so as to make a tight joint, and then reinforced by an inner sheathing upon which the laths were nailed to receive the inside finish of plaster.

The summers, which extended from north to south through the center of the house, were heavily dovetailed into the beams, and were about eight by twelve inches of heavy yellow pine. From the outside beams to the summers three by four oak joists were laid to support the floor. The main plates were seven inches square, of white oak, forty-one feet long; the upper ends of the posts which were ten by fifteen, were halved and cut down so that the plates dropped in upon the top of the posts and there securely pinned and framed.

## **A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE**

The king rafters, which were five by six inches and about twenty-two feet long, of white oak, were placed edgeways, and each one framed in and over the plate on to the outside portion of the posts which finished even with the plate. About half-way from the plate to the peak of the roof, string-piece rafters, four by five, of white oak, were framed into the king rafters so as to support the ordinary rafters of the roof from the peak to the eaves, and served the purpose of purlin plates.

In making some repairs upon the house a stock of clean square edged lumber was removed, measuring fully twenty-six and a half inches in width, indicating the splendid quality and size of the pine timber that once clothed the uplands and slopes of the lower Connecticut Valley.

Over each fireplace a beveled, heavy pine panel about four feet by twenty-six

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

inches was framed into the wainscoting, and some of the rooms were ornamented with rude landscape paintings.

The garret door was made of two pieces of board rived and split out from native yellow pine. The heavy material of the structure of the house was mostly hewn. The Pitkins in 1684 and later owned saw mill privileges on the Hockanum River from which the finishing lumber was doubtless obtained.

Another house located in East Hartford, also originally built by the Pitkins, is shown in the following cut, and is a type of the substantial character of the buildings which succeeded the original shacks and smaller dwellings of the first settlers. But, after all, the contents of the deserted garrets and dilapidated chambers which remain, furnish the most complete picture of the domestic life of the period.

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

The subjoined illustration is a photograph of a letter written by Chief Justice Oliver Ellsworth to Mr. Roswell Grant, of East Windsor, and the following memoranda from the old records are indicative of the homely life of the dwellers in the wilderness.

The following quotation from Captain Lemuel Stoughton's papers contains a suggestive bit of pathos as to the strain under which the colonies were laboring after the Revolutionary struggle with the mother country was fully under way:

"EAST WINDSOR, April 21, 177.

"We the Subscribers being convened by orders for ye Great & important purpose of furnishing our Proportion of men for the Continentall Army & notwithstanding the encouragement heretofore made by ye Hon<sup>ble</sup> Continentall congress and this State and town; there appears a backwardness we the subscribers therefore considering ye necesaty of our furnishing our coto are willing and promis to pay to Capt. James Harper and Capt. Lemuel

Philadelphia July 26. 1827.

From my heart, dear Sir I would wish you &  
Mrs Grant in the lap of a first born. How precious  
are our enjoyments! And how inconsolable would  
be our grief at parting with our tender offspring,  
but from the hope of re-embracing them in a  
better world, to which I doubt not they aspired?

Please Sir to present my dutiful respects  
to our common parents, who I fear, may ponder  
with too much sadness a instructive a lesson  
as the third generation passing away before  
them.

The convention I think will hold a  
month or six weeks longer yet. The ardua regni  
you <sup>know</sup> must have time & patience.

I am, dear Sir most cordially,  
Your friend & humble Servant  
Oliver Ellsworth

Ros. Grant

Facsimile of letter of Chief Justice Oliver Ellsworth to Captain Roswell Grant, of  
East Windsor, during the sessions of the Constitutional Convention

Oct 7<sup>th</sup> 1777

Dear Sir

I have lost - & cannot  
tell how an old & favourite  
perhaps & am much distressed  
for want of one - if you have  
any in your store, please to  
send me one - if you have not,  
be so good as to get one imme-  
diately. - perhaps, Mr Bayly  
could furnish me. - one with  
two blades I should prefer,  
where choice can be had.

I am D<sup>r</sup> Sir

Y<sup>r</sup> most Obed.

E. Washington

## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

Stoughton ye sums we annex to our names Provided there is a number sufficient appears and enlists to make up quota to be required for three years or during the war, and we order sd Harper and Stoughton to collect forthwith and pay said sums to those so enlisting."

Then follow the names of eighty-five residents of East Windsor, including Bissells, Stoughtons, Barbours, Munsills, Allens, Osborns, Loomises, Stileses, Blodgetts and Priors, the document being endorsed on the back by David Trumbull and John Ellsworth.

This sample of what the old garrets of East Windsor now disclose is but a modicum of what might have been found by the antiquary fifty years before the remodeling of the old houses and the removal of families had taken place.

In a memorandum in Captain Lemuel Stoughton's handwriting, dated at Scantic, the 10th of April, 1776, he itemizes the



## **A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE**

labor in carrying on the manufacture of "Salt Petre," which was used as a basis for the gunpowder supply.

However, it is not the particular value of any one item disclosed by the antiquary, but the whole picture of colonial life, as unfolded from these homely records of the ancestors, that is worth preserving. With their perusal comes an ever-growing veneration for the men and the women who thought out, molded and transmitted to posterity our fundamental principles of civil, political and religious liberty. To dissociate religion and its salutary influences on the administration of law from law making is a strong tendency of modern times; but it is calculated to undermine the foundations of the magnificent constitutional guarantees framed by the colonists in a spirit of reverence for the God of Nations. Indifference to religious

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## A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE

restraint will bring ruinous consequences, a long train of corroding evils upon our civilization, and produce moral wastes throughout our borders.

In leaving this little group of state-builders, whose anticipations for the future were seemingly so small compared with the tremendous results of their labor, we can hardly do better than to present a fac-simile of one of General Washington's letters in which he hopes a Mr. Bayley can furnish him with a penknife. It is interesting to note minute particulars of the strong men who made up national life and nurtured its infancy so every word from Washington's pen whether pertaining to questions of government or to the common daily routine should be treasured by all true Americans. Out of the cobwebbed garrets from which we have exhumed the notes of this book, we

## **A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE**

come upon this valuable evidence—that the greatest of Americans was simply and plainly human, again illustrating the fact that great characters are never beyond the finite needs and daily calls of their humble associates.

There was small thought in the minds of the humble craftsmen who built their merchant sloops at the mouth of the Scanatic that they were founding a commerce looking far beyond the little shallops of that day to the mighty fleet of American merchantmen now bearing that commerce into the ports of farthest India; and still less was the thought in the mind of the country's leader that his urgent demand for a penknife was but the exponent of the tremendous industrial forces which send the products of our country all over the world and challenge mankind to rival them in every branch of material develop-

#### **A CORNER STONE OF COLONIAL COMMERCE**

ment. The attics and the garrets of that period of the Scantic sloop-builders were holding in their keeping records of the mighty forces which now unloosed have made American commerce and American honor a synonym for national integrity in every department of human effort.















